

# EQ Review

Educational Quality in the Developing World



*EQ Review is a newsletter published by USAID's EQUIP1 to share knowledge about issues fundamental to improving educational quality and to communicate the successes, challenges, and lessons learned by USAID Missions.*

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## Education in Crisis and Transitional Settings

Natural disasters, armed conflicts and instabilities affect millions of people around the world every year. For example, as a result of the recent tsunami that struck parts of South Asia and Africa on December 26, 2004, UNICEF estimated that one-third of all deaths and injuries were sustained by children. For many countries, conflict and instability are the foremost barriers to providing universal primary education. A DFID study points out that in 2000, 82 percent of the reported 113 million children out of school were living in crisis and post-crisis countries (Smith and Vaux 2003<sup>1</sup>).

For the last decade and a half, there has been an increasing recognition among the international humanitarian community<sup>2</sup> of the need to provide access to education for children and young people affected by crisis and emergency. The U.S. Government supports the two largest international agreements concerning international basic education: The Dakar Education For All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals.<sup>3</sup> Many international agencies, including USAID, have been active in providing educational assistance in countries affected by conflict or natural disasters where the education system is destabilized or destroyed.

Education can be both life-sustaining and life-saving. Schooling reestablishes a sense of normalcy and structure and builds self-esteem and hope for the future. It also saves lives by protecting against exploitation and harm, especially for girls and adolescents. It meets the psychosocial needs of children and adolescents affected by trauma and displacement and can be used to disseminate key survival messages such as landmine safety and prevention of HIV/AIDS.

In conflict and post-conflict situations, education is a tool for conflict resolution and peace building. It helps to reinforce democratization and political stability. It promotes reintegration and the conditions needed to achieve sustainable development, and helps to expand diminished pools of human resources necessary for reconstruction. The rebuilding of an education system is an opportunity for governments and donors to promote education reform.



*Girls in a CARE school in Afghanistan*

However, governments of crisis-affected countries often lack the capacity or the will to respond to the educational needs of the affected populace, thus the need for international assistance.

For more information, please contact Hassan Mohamed, Senior Technical Advisor for Basic and Girls' Education Unit, CARE USA, member of the INEE Working Group on Minimum Standards and EQUIP1 Education in Emergencies Specialist, at [mohamed@care.org](mailto:mohamed@care.org).

**Beyond the two programs in Afghanistan that are highlighted in this issue, USAID-funded education interventions in conflict and post conflict situations include projects in Bolivia, Haiti, Iraq, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, and Tajikistan. For a review of education programs in emergency situations, please see the [EQUIP1 Leader Award](#).**

# Education in Crisis and Transitional Settings

## The Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP) <sup>1</sup>

### The Program

#### *Accelerated Learning*

In 2003, APEP began an accelerated learning program to help primary level students catch up on schooling missed due to years of continuous conflict. APEP works through five Afghan NGO implementing partners, each with long experience in community development and education. These NGOs work with community committees who select local teachers and students, and provide space for classes to meet. Currently over 170,000 learners are enrolled in grades one to four. APEP supporting partners provide the NGO partners with learner-centered teacher education and support, both in-person and radio-based, and monitoring and evaluation. Since 2003, APEP has also managed the printing and distribution of over 26 million textbooks for all twelve grades in over 6000 schools across Afghanistan.

#### *Teacher Education*

APEP also participates in the Teacher Education program (TEP), a joint program of the Ministries of Education and Higher Education, implemented with support from UNICEF, USAID, DANIDA, JICA and the World Bank and guided by the Teacher Training Directorate of the Ministry of Education. Over the next 10 years it is intended that Afghan and international educators will complete a comprehensive reform of Afghanistan's entire teacher education system. Currently, Afghan teacher educators are implementing a nationwide in-service training for over 105,000 teachers in Afghanistan's primary and secondary schools. APEP is supporting this activity by providing capacity building to Ministry staff who are carrying out the training. Also, APEP, with UNICEF, is funding the materials development and training expenses.

#### *Radio-Based Teacher Education*

APEP's teacher training is supplemented by its radio-based teacher training (RTT) program which broadcasts daily programs over two national and 32 local stations. The programs offer a combination of new teaching methods, content-specific lessons and a serial drama highlighting the vital role teachers play in community life. The program reaches an estimated 50% of all teachers, approximately 52,000. Over 9,500 teachers are enrolled in the RTT Support program. Nine Afghan partner organizations provide staff who observe teacher performance in the classroom, helping to measure the extent to which the radio-based lessons are influencing their teaching. Teachers also take written pre-tests and post-tests to measure gains from each radio-based module.

#### *Capacity Building*

APEP also works to strengthen institutional systems and to build capacity of education government staff. Education Specialists in teacher education, higher

education, policy reform, program planning, English language teacher education, monitoring and evaluation, and communications work within Ministry of Education institutions to achieve these objectives.

***We want our boys to put down their guns and go to work. We want boys and girls to be able to go to school.***

Afghan girls participating in APEP's Accelerated Learning program in Kandahar Province, 2004

### Lessons Learned

After 2001, many projects worked in emergency mode and gradually shifted to capacity building and system building. But there have been challenges along the way. For instance, capacity building activities timed to meet donor deadlines must often be delayed due to the schedule of national elections and the slow growth of political action groups. In addition, Government offices are struggling to operate without supplies, without trained staff and without clear guidelines. Security protocols must constantly be revised. Parents and children are demanding schools, textbooks and teachers as never before. From this challenging environment and with the patience of Afghan colleagues we have learned to

- Depend on the strengths of local organizations with proven experience in managing and implementing community-based education programs;
- Share information with other organizations working in the same sector;
- Work across sectors with other ministries to be aware of practices that work in the Afghan context;
- Always take into account cultural differences;
- Provide documents in appropriate languages;
- Listen well to Afghan colleagues' expressed needs and be ready to adjust programming as ministry management and administrative systems develop and needs change.

About six months ago, donors were suggesting it was time for a move from the emergency to the 'development' phase. Perhaps the main lesson learned is that there are *stages of transition* that continue for some time in the education-in-crisis environment. These stages are often vaguely defined and iterative. Constant and direct communication is the only way to move collaboratively and effectively through these stages.

For more information, please contact Jim McCloud, USAID CTO for APEP: [JMcCloud@usaid.gov](mailto:JMcCloud@usaid.gov).

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## Learning for Life

Afghanistan suffers from one of the highest maternal and infant mortality rates in the world. Women's access to health care is seriously constrained by the scarcity of female health workers, especially in the rural areas. Cultural norms generally do not allow women and girls to be attended by male health providers. If women are to receive even basic health care, it is essential to train women to work within their own communities. However, the female literacy rate is estimated at 21 percent nationally. As part of the effort to train a new cohort of female local health workers, the Center for International Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst is implementing *Learning for Life (LfL)*, a health-focused literacy initiative. The *Learning for Life* program enables women to gain essential literacy and numeracy skills in the context of health issues within their communities. Women in the *Learning for Life* program will become better qualified candidates for training as Community Health Workers and Community Midwives.

This project is being implemented as a component of the larger USAID/Afghanistan-funded REACH program by Management Sciences for Health to improve the health of women of reproductive age and of children under five. The University of Massachusetts collaborates with the International Rescue Committee to design the curriculum, work with communities to organize classes, train facilitators and insure that the literacy classes complement the training for Community Health Workers and Community Midwives provided by REACH.

The program features local learning centers where women attend classes for several hours each afternoon. Using nonformal and gender-sensitive pedagogies, local facilitators guide the women through a series of learning milestones in reading, writing, math, science, and religion from the formal school curriculum and the priority health issues for rural women. One of the technical challenges of the program is training local facilitators to work with learners of different ages and abilities in the same classroom. Supporting a learner-centered, multi-level classroom requires intensive facilitator training and monitoring. Another lesson learned to date is the investment necessary in community mobilization—building understanding of program aims and trusting relationships—throughout program implementation.

There are currently 60 *LfL* learning centers operating in two provinces (Kabul and Herat). In subsequent phases, the program will be implemented in 11 additional provinces by NGOs under the guidance of the International Rescue Committee. Over the next year, *Learning for Life* aims to enable approximately 3900 women to reach a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade equivalency level and approximately 1400 women to reach a 6<sup>th</sup> grade equivalency level. An additional 300 women will participate in a bridging program designed to prepare them for entry into community midwifery training programs.

For more information, please contact Jim Griffin, CTO, Health, at [jagriffin@usaid.gov](mailto:jagriffin@usaid.gov) or Dr. Ibrahim Maroof at [imarooof@usaid.gov](mailto:imarooof@usaid.gov), Specialist-Health, Alternate CTO for REACH contract.

## The Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies<sup>1</sup>

Strategy Five of the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000 Framework for Action declared a commitment to “*meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability, and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict.*”

The first Global Consultation on Education in Emergencies was convened in November 2000. One of the outcomes of the Consultation was the formation of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). INEE members pledged to work collectively to:

- Share knowledge and experience through electronic and other means;
- Promote better collaboration and coordination among NGOs, UN agencies and governments;
- Promote greater donor understanding of education in emergencies;
- Advocate for education to be included in emergency response;
- Document and disseminate best practices in the field; and
- Move towards consensual guidelines on education in emergencies.

INEE members have recognized that much more must be done to make education in emergencies one of the key pillars of humanitarian response and a priority in early reconstruction and decided in 2003 to undertake two important initiatives. Key among these was the development of consensual guidelines, which became the Minimum Standards in Education Emergencies (MSEE) process.

### Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies

Over a year and a half, the Working Group on Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies (WGMSEE) harnessed the experience and enthusiasm of 13 organizations with expertise in education in crisis and early reconstruction situations<sup>2</sup>. WGMSEE has facilitated broad base consultations to develop standards, indicators and guidance notes that articulate the minimum level of educational access and provision to be attained in emergencies through to early reconstruction. Over 2,250 individuals from more than 50 countries contributed to the development of the minimum standards for education in emergencies through national, sub-regional and regional consultations; on-line consultation inputs via the INEE list-serve; and a peer review process.

The handbook of *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction* was launched at INEE's Second Global Inter-Agency Consultation on Education in Emergencies and Early Recovery, in Cape Town, South Africa, on 2–4 December 2004. The standards focus on building local capacity and more effective coordination with local and international partners, education authorities and host communities. The handbook also establishes minimum

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standards conducive to improved learning opportunities by linking education programs to psychosocial aid, shelter, health, water supply, sanitation, nutrition, and security. The standards give guidance and flexibility in responding to needs at the most important level – the community – while providing a harmonized framework to coordinate the educational activities of funding agencies and other development partners. The minimum standards are represented in five categories.

- I. **Minimum Standards Common to All Categories:** focuses on the essential areas of community participation and utilizing local resources when applying the standards in the handbook, as well as ensuring that emergency education responses are based on an initial assessment and are followed by monitoring and evaluation.
- II. **Access and Learning Environment:** focuses on partnerships to promote access to learning opportunities as well as inter-sectoral linkages with, for example, health, water and sanitation, food aid (nutrition) and shelter, to enhance security and physical, cognitive and psychological well-being.
- III. **Teaching and Learning:** focuses on critical elements that promote effective teaching and learning: 1) curriculum, 2) training, 3) instruction, and 4) assessment.
- IV. **Teachers and other Education Personnel:** focuses on the administration and management of human resources in the field of education, including recruitment and selection, conditions of service, and supervision and support.
- V. **Education Policy and Coordination:** focuses on policy formulation and enactment, planning and implementation, and coordination.

INEE encourages all organizations and individuals to be involved in the promotion and implementation of the minimum standards. Please join INEE<sup>3</sup> if you are not a member. The handbook of *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction* is immediately available on INEE's website ([http://www.ineesite.org/standards/order\\_msee.asp](http://www.ineesite.org/standards/order_msee.asp)).

Photo: Reuters, Yves Herman



The MSEE, which has been translated into Indonesian by UNICEF, is already being used in Banda Aceh, Indonesia and in Sri Lanka.

USAID is supporting the MSEE by funding (1) translations of the handbook and (2) training activities for implementation of the MSEE. For more information, please contact Mitch Kirby, USAID Representative to INEE's Working Group on Minimum Standards, at [mikirby@usaid.gov](mailto:mikirby@usaid.gov).

## Footnotes

### Cover

<sup>1</sup> Smith, Alan, and Vaux, Tony (2003). *Education, Conflict and International Development*. DFID.

<sup>2</sup> The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948, 1951); [United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (1989); the World Conference on [Education for All](#) (1990); the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995); the Education for All Conference (1996); [The UN Report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children](#) (Graça Machel Report, 1996); World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal (2000)

<sup>3</sup> There are two [Millennium Development Goals](#) relevant to education: Goal 2 – Achieve Universal Primary Education and Goal 3 – Promote Gender equality and empower women.

### APEP

<sup>1</sup> APEP is funded by USAID and implemented by Creative Associates International, Inc. in association with: Afghanistan Development Association (ADA), Aguirre International, American Manufacturers Export Group (AMEG), Afghan Women's Educational Center (AWEC), Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), Children in Crises (CiC), Coordination of Afghan Relief (CoAR), Development Humanitarian Services for Afghanistan (DHSA), Media Support Solutions (MSS).

### INEE

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from an article in *Forced Migration Review (2005) #22* by Allison Anderson, INEE Focal Point for Minimum Standards on Education in Emergencies ([allison@theirc.org](mailto:allison@theirc.org)) and Beverly Roberts, INEE Network Coordinator ([broberts@care.org](mailto:broberts@care.org); [coordinator@ineesite.org](mailto:coordinator@ineesite.org)).

<sup>2</sup> As an example, the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee, CARE, the Forum for African Women Educators (FAWE), the International Rescue Committee, the International Save the Children Alliance, Jesuit Refugee Services, the Norwegian Refugee Council, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, and the World Food Programme all operated education in emergency programs in the 1990s.

<sup>3</sup> INEE members communicate principally through a moderated list-serve (discussion group), to pose challenging implementation and policy questions, share new resources and highlight model programmes. INEE's website ([www.ineesite.org](http://www.ineesite.org)) covers all topics of education in crisis through the posting of model and successful programmes, up-to-date resources, good practice guides and links to other helpful web tools and sites. INEE has prepared a CD-ROM of almost all of its collected education in crisis materials, including accelerated learning curricula, HIV/AIDS education tools and guides, advocacy materials and evaluations.

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